



NATSILS

**NATIONAL ABORIGINAL & TORRES
STRAIT ISLANDER LEGAL SERVICES**

MEDIA RELEASE

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The Redfern Statement 2016: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak organisations unite

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (NATSILS) has united with other community leaders in Redfern this morning to call on political leaders to tackle inequality and disadvantage facing Australia's First People as a federal election priority.

Dr Jackie Huggins, Co-Chair of National Congress of Australia's First Peoples read from the Redfern Statement (the Statement), calling for an immediate restoration of the \$534 million funding cut from the Indigenous Affairs Portfolio, to be invested into meaningful engagement, health, justice, preventing violence, early childhood and disability.

"The over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the criminal justice system is a national crisis. Both major parties are compelled to act - we cannot turn a blind eye" said Wayne Muir, Co-Chair of NATSILS.

"The Redfern Statement articulates a plan to properly address the crisis state of access to justice, which includes a call to immediately reversing planned funding cuts to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services due to come into effect in 2017 and committing to the development of an evidenced-based long term funding model so NATSILS can address unmet legal needs"

Among its justice asks, the Statement calls for the next government to commit to implementing wrap-around service delivery models that seek to address and prevent the issues that underlie the legal problems facing women, children and families.

"It's not enough that family law gets the leftovers after you've dealt with state and territory criminal law matters. We need a minimum of \$25million per annum that is segregated and protected for a stand-alone family law practice in each Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service across the country".

The Redfern Statement has been developed by national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak and representative bodies including: National Congress of Australia's First Peoples, NATSILS, First Peoples Disability Network (FPDN), National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (NACCHO), National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services (FVPLS), Secretariat for National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC), The Healing Foundation, and The National Health Leadership Forum (NHLF). The Statement also has the overarching support of The Change the Record Coalition, Close the Gap Steering Committee, and Family Matters campaigns. The Statement also has been endorsed by Reconciliation Australia and over 55 mainstream organisations, including the Australian Medical Association and Law Council.

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